

Message Text

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FOR: G&F AND O&P, FCA
FROM: AG OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR
SUBJECT: PRC: WINTER CROP SITUATION, 1977-78

1. THE PEOPLE'S DAILY OF MARCH 13, 1978, REPORTED THAT A CONFERENCE ON WINTER CROPS HAD BEEN HELD BY THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IN SHIHCHIACHUANG, HOPEH PROVINCE. IT WAS ATTENDED BY THE TOP AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS OF THE MAJOR WINTER CROP AREAS, WHICH INCLUDES 15 PROVINCES (AND MUNICIPALITIES) AND 41 PREFECTURES.

2. THE JOB OF WINTER CROP SOWING REPORTEDLY WAS DONE WELL LAST FALL AND THE CROP HAS BASICALLY A FULL STAND WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF FIRST-GRADE SEEDLINGS. THE CONDITION OF WINTER WHEAT WAS SAID TO BE BETTER THAN THE VERY POOR CONDITIONS LAST YEAR IN MOST FIELDS BUT ALSO BETTER THAN THOSE OF THE VERY GOOD 1975-76 CROP. RAPESEED REPORTEDLY WAS TRANSPLANTED ON A LARGER AREA, MISSING PLANTS WERE FEWER THAN A YEAR BEFORE, AND THE YOUNG RAPE PLANTS WERE GROWING WELL -- A FAVORABLE SITUATION THAT HAD NOT EXISTED IN RECENT YEARS. THE CONFERENCE CONCLUDED ON THE WHOLE, THE PREREQUISITES WERE FAVORABLE FOR A BUMPER WINTER CROP (SUMMER) HARVEST THIS YEAR.

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3. THE CONFERENCE ALSO RECOGNIZED A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS, NAMELY:
(1) EXCESSIVE VEGETATIVE GROWTH OF WHEAT DUE TO THE MILD WINTER AND, IN SOME CASES, EARLY AND/OR OVERLY HEAVY SEEDING, OVERWATERING, AND EXCESSIVE FERTILIZATION; (2) WINTER KILL IN SOME AREAS; (3) THIRD-GRADE WHEAT AND RAPE PLANTS THAT HAVE GROWN WELL, AND (4) DUE TO THE MILD WINTER, THERE WAS DANGER OF

EXCESSIVE KILL SHOULD LATE FROST OCCUR.

4. THE CONFERENCE, IN GENERAL, RECOMMENDED THAT CADRES AND COMMUNE MEMBERS RID THEMSELVES OF BLIND OPTIMISM; BE PREPARED FOR SEVERE LATE FROST; AND INSIST ON KEEPING A REGULAR WORK FORCE TO TEND WINTER CROPS DURING THE UPCOMING BUSY DAYS FOR SPRING FARMING.

5. COMMENT: THE 1977-78 WINTER WHEAT IS HANDICAPPED BY A REDUCTION IN SOWN AREA (SEE TOFAS 220, DEC. 12, 1977). IN SPITE OF THE COMPARATIVELY BETTER GROWING CONDITION THUS FAR, THE CONFERENCE ADMITTED THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR OPTIMISM. WHEAT YIELDS WILL BE DETERMINED BY WEATHER CONDITIONS OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. A YIELD INCREASE IS NECESSARY NOT ONLY TO COMPENSATE FOR THE SHORTFALL IN ACREAGE THIS YEAR BUT ALSO TO PUSH OUTTURN ABOVE THE VERY POOR 1976/77 CROP. BARRING UNFAVORABLE WEATHER -- ESPECIALLY LATE FROST OR SERIOUS SPRING DROUGHT -- WHEAT OUTTURN SHOULD EXCEED 1976/77 BY A SIZEABLE MARGIN BUT WILL LIKELY FALL SHORT OF THE 1975/76 RECORD.

6. THE PROSPECTS FOR THE RAPESEED CROP ARE BETTER. THE PLANTING OF RAPE WAS DONE UNDER BETTER MOISTURE CONDITIONS THAN FOR WHEAT IN MOST OF THE MAJOR GROWING AREAS. ALTHOUGH THE SOWN AREA OF WINTER RAPE IS PROBABLY ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST YEAR, THE ENLARGED TRANSPLANTING WOULD TEND TO RAISE THE PER-HECTARE YIELD OF THE CROP. UNLESS THERE ARE KILLING FROSTS, TO WHICH THE

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RAPE PLANT IS MOST VULNERABLE, OR UNFAVORABLE PRECIPITATION, THE CHANCES ARE GOOD FOR A SHARP INCREASE IN RAPESEED PRODUCTION.
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